

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 PRS-01 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PA-01 USIA-04 RSR-01 /049 W

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R 101032 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8705

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 2897

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJ: DOMESTIC POLITICS: BHUTTO' S PLANS

REF: ISLAMABAD 2841

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT BHUTTO' S SPECIAL ASSISTANT CONFIRMED TO CHARGE THAT GOP INTENDED HOLD NATIONAL REFERENDUM ON CONSTITUTION FOLLOWING ITS EXPECTED APPROVAL BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APRIL 10, BUT INDICATED THAT SEVERAL WEEKS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PREPARE FOR IT. GOP EXPECTED HEAVY MAJORITY FOR CONSTITUTION REFERENDUM INCLUDING BALUCHISTAN AND NWFP VOTE. GOP STILL CONSIDERING NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN DECEMBER 1973 BUT TIMING APPARENTLY NOT YET DEFINITELY DECIDED. CHARGE NOTED THAT OPPOSITION HAD EXPRESSED DEEP PESSIMISM OVER CURRENT SITUATION AND THERE WERE FEARS OF VIOLENCE. SPEAKING PERSONNALLY, HE EXPRESSED STRONG HOPE THAT PRESIDENT BHUTTO WOULD CONTINUE SEEK SOLUTION TO POLITICAL PROBLEMS THROUGH CONCILIATION AND POLITICAL MEANS RATHER THAN RESORT TO FORCE. END SUMMARY.

1. I CALLED ON PRESIDENT BHUTTO' S SPECIAL ASSISTANT, RAFI RAZA, APRIL 9 AFTERNOON TO SOUND HIM OUT ON POLITICAL SITUATION
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RESULTING FROM OPPOSITION' S REJECTION BHUTTO' S COMPROMISE
OFFER ON CONSTITUTION (REFTEL) . I FOUND HIM IN GENERALLY
CONFIDENT MOOD.

2. RAZA SAID CONSTITUTION WOULD BE GIVEN FINAL APPROVAL
BY ASSEMBLY ON APRIL 10. BHUTTO WOULD ATTEND FINAL PART
OF SESSION AND GIVE WIND- UP SPEECH. I OBSERVED THAT PRESI-
DENT HAD MENTIONED TO ME HIS INTENTION TO HOLD NATIONAL
REFERENDUM ON CONSTITUTION FOLLOWING ENACTMENT BY ASSEMBLY.
RAZA SAID THIS INFORMATION WAS STILL BEING HELD VERY CLOSELY.
TIMING WAS NOW BEING EXPLORED. IT WOULD TAKE ABOUT TWO
WEEKS TO GET READY (PRINTING ELECTORAL ROLLS, ETC.) AFTER
REFERENDUM DECISION MADE PUBLIC.

3. I INQUIRED AS TO HIS EXPECTATIONS FROM REFERENDUM.
RAZA UNHESITATINGLY REPLIED " SEVENTY TO SEVENTY- FIVE PER-
CENT". NOTING THAT I ASSUMED A MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF REFERENDUM
WAS TO DEMONSTRATE POPULAR SUPPORT FOR CONSTITUTION IN
BALUCHISTAN, I ASKED WHAT HE EXPECTED THERE. RAFI SAID HE
BELIEVED RESULTS IN BALUCHISTAN WOULD BE EVEN MORE FAVORABLE
THAN NATIONAL AVERAGE. HE ANTICIPATED " ONE HUNDRED PER-
CENT" RESULTS IN LASBELA, QUETTA CITY, AND PATHAN- INHABITED
NORTHERN PARTS OF PROVINCE WHICH, HE POINTED OUT, CONTAINED
LARGE PROPORTION OF BALUCHISTAN' S SKIMPY POPULATION.
ELSEWHERE IN PROVINCE, HE EXPECTED SPLIT VOTE AMONG MARRI
AND MENGAL TRIBES, AND BUGTIS WOULD " OF COURSE" VOTE AS
SPECIFIED BY GOVERNOR BUGTI. RAZA SAID THERE WOULD ALSO
BE SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY FOR CONSTITUTION IN NWFP, WHERE
NAP WAS BELIEVED TO PREDOMINATE ONLY IN A FEW AREAS.

4. I NOTED THAT PRES BHUTTO HAD TOLD ME IN CONFIDENCE
SOME TIME AGO THAT HE WAS ANTICIPATING PROMULGATION
OF NEW CONSTITUTION ON AUGUST 14 AND THAT NEW NATIONAL
ELECTIONS MIGHT BE HELD PERHAPS ON DECEMBER 7 (THIRD
ANNIVERSARY OF LAST ELECTIONS). RAFI ACKNOWLEDGED THAT
HAD BEEN GOVERNMENT' S CURRENT THINKING FOR " OUR EARLY
TIMETABLE". (I GATHERED IMPRESSION THAT TIMINGS NOT YET
DEFINITELY DECIDED.) GOVERNMENT WAS MOST ANXIOUS NOT
HAVE ITS INTENTIONS RE ELECTIONS PREMATURELY REVEALED,
HOWEVER, SINCE THIS WOULD RESULT IN UNDULY PROLONGED
ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN.

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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